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KINSHASA PASS TO BRAZZAVILLE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC IV](#)

SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE: VISIT BY AFRICAN UNION CHAIRMAN
YIELDS NO RESULTS

REF: ABIDJAN 1020

Classified By: Economic Officer Erfana Dar for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (U) Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of Congo and current Chairman of the African Union (AU), visited Abidjan September 10-12. He met individually with each of the five principal Ivoirian political leaders: President Gbagbo, principal opposition party leaders Bedie and Ouattara, and rebel New Forces leader Soro, and then on September 11 and 12 he met with them all as a group.

¶2. (U) At the end of the visit, President Sassou announced in a press conference that his visit had yielded no results. Sassou recalled that when he last visited here in April, he sought to forge a consensus among the political leaders to move forward simultaneously with identification of undocumented Ivoirians and foreigners, in preparation for elections, and with disarmament. He noted that in the wake of his April visit there had been some progress on both fronts, but both had once again stalled. He said he had sought in this visit to unblock them, but had been unsuccessful.

¶3. (U) Sassou did praise a new proposal by Prime Minister Banny for an "exceptional political decision" to remove the "blockages" preventing movement forward, but he said it was not met with consensus. When questioned by reporters, Sassou refused to specify what blockages he was referring to, or to provide any details about the Banny proposal.

¶4. (C) Comment: President Sassou seems to have come here without a specific plan to restart the peace process and perhaps without a full appreciation of the depth and complexity of this country's political crisis. Indeed, this crisis may well not yet be ripe for a resolution -- the Ivoirian sides have dug in their heels and any will to compromise seems to have disappeared. Nevertheless, both the international community and the Ivoirian political elite will continue to look to Sassou and other African leaders, and to the AU and ECOWAS as regional organizations, to search for a way forward after October. End Comment.
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